



# GO AND...

## STEWARDSHIP PREACHING IDEAS

*for the ministry program year for the congregations of the Nebraska Synod for 2023-2024*

*Based on the REVISED COMMON LECTIONARY- YEARS A-B, Matthew-Mark\**

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### **Go and Serve With Your Neighbor**

**Sunday September 10<sup>th</sup> – 15<sup>th</sup>** Sunday after Pentecost (Lectionary 23A)

Gospel Text: Matthew 18:15-20

Stewardship Passage: Romans 13:8-14

Other Appointed Readings: Ezekiel 33:7-11; Psalm 119:33-40

Potential Stewardship Preaching Nugget: The gospel speaks to the importance of reconciliation, while Romans reminds us of the summation of the law “to love one another” (Rom 13:8). As many congregations celebrate the beginning of ministry years today (some may even call this “Rally Sunday”), what is at the center of what it means to be a community of faith and our calling as Children of God and Christians? How do we steward our relationships? How do we steward, care, and nurture our relationships with our neighbors?

**Sunday September 17<sup>th</sup> – 16<sup>th</sup>** Sunday after Pentecost (Lectionary 24A)

Gospel Text: Matthew 18:21-35

Stewardship Passage: Romans 14:1-12

Other Appointed Readings: Genesis 50:15-21; Psalm 103: [1-7], 8-13

Potential Stewardship Preaching Nugget: The overall theme of the RCL passages for today has to do with reconciliation, forgiveness, and how each play out in community. As part of this it is important to lift up a message of gratitude, and a way to do this might be to reflect on the act of giving thanks (Rom 14:6) to the One and for the One who makes community and reconciliation possible. The community to which we are called to, and the one in which we show up with and for our neighbors.

**Sunday September 24<sup>th</sup> – 17<sup>th</sup>** Sunday after Pentecost (Lectionary 25A)

Gospel Text: Matthew 20:1-16

Stewardship Passage: Matthew 20:1-16

Other Appointed Readings: Jonah 3:10-4:11; Psalm 145:1-8; Philippians 1:21-30

Potential Stewardship Preaching Nugget: The parable of the vineyard workers or the parable of the landowner, how ever you would like to call it, is an opportunity to talk about how God’s economy is different than our own. God chooses to “give to this last the same as I give to you” (Matt 20:14). This could be an opportunity to talk about how all that we have and all that we are, are entrusted to us by God, a foundational starting place to understanding stewardship and one that greatly shifts and impacts an understanding of relationships and being in relationship with one’s neighbors.

### **Go and Ask**

**Sunday October 1<sup>st</sup> – 18<sup>th</sup>** Sunday after Pentecost (Lectionary 26A)

Gospel Text: Matthew 21:23-32

Stewardship Passage: Philippians 2:1-13

Other Appointed Readings: Ezekiel 18:1-4, 25-32; Psalm 25:1-9

Potential Stewardship Preaching Nugget: “The Christ Hymn” in Philippians provides a wonderful opportunity to reflect on the tenants of our faith. But this passage ends with a golden nugget for stewardship recognizing

that God works in and through us to build up God's kingdom and to do God's work and mission in the world. As we hear, "for it is God who is at work in you..." (Phil 2:13). In the spirit of "Go and ask," you might ponder a question about discipleship this week or ponder the questions of authority and baptism posed to and by Jesus in Matthew 21.

**Sunday October 8<sup>th</sup> – 19<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost (Lectionary 27A)**

Gospel Text: Matthew 21:33-46

Stewardship Passage: Matthew 21:33-46

Other Appointed Readings: Isaiah 5:1-7; Psalm 80:7-15; Philippians 3:4b-14

Potential Stewardship Preaching Nugget: The parable of the vineyard owner's son is a challenging one about God's work, mission, and righteousness. Particularly challenging other than the idea of murder in this story, is that Jesus says, "Therefore I tell you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people that produces the fruit of the kingdom" (Matt 21:43). Might there be implications for not doing God's work that we are called to and entrusted with gifts, strengths, and capacity to do? How do we as Lutherans wrestle with this stewardship and ministry call, with the theological tension of not believing in works righteousness?

**Sunday October 15<sup>th</sup> – 20<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost (Lectionary 28A)**

Gospel Text: Matthew 22:1-14

Stewardship Passage: Philippians 4:1-9

Other Appointed Readings: Isaiah 25:1-9; Psalm 23

Potential Stewardship Preaching Nugget: "Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice" (Phil 4:4). Today is an excellent opportunity to preach on joy, celebrating, and giving thanks. What are some things in your context to celebrate and give thanks for? What stories of ministry in action can be celebrated in your midst? Stewardship is about telling the stories of ministry, giving thanks, and inviting or asking people to join and/or continue to be a part of that ministry. Today you can lift up the message to "keep on doing the things that you have learned and received and heard and seen" and been called to in Christ Jesus (Phil 4:9).

**Sunday October 22<sup>nd</sup> – 21<sup>st</sup> Sunday after Pentecost (Lectionary 29A)**

Gospel Text: Matthew 22:15-22

Stewardship Passage: Matthew 22:15-22

Other Appointed Readings: Isaiah 45:1-7; Psalm 96:1-9 [10-13]; 1 Thessalonians 1:1-10

Potential Stewardship Preaching Nugget: You could build off the idea of thanksgiving found in the beginning of 1 Thessalonians, but it would probably be more beneficial to wander into the challenge of two kingdoms theology, and how we live in the now and not yet, and are called to be engaged in the world we live in. One way we do this, is by giving to our communities (giving to the emperor) while also giving to God (Matt 22:21). Stewardship involves recognizing these tensions, asking faithful questions as we wrestle in the tensions, all the while being engaged in the world that God has given us, and serving and living faithfully.

**Sunday October 29<sup>th</sup> – Reformation Sunday**

Gospel Text: John 8:31-36

Stewardship Passage: John 8:31-36 & Romans 3:19-28

Other Appointed Readings: Jeremiah 31:31-34; Psalm 46

Potential Stewardship Preaching Nugget: What does this mean? At the heart of the understanding of a Lutheran faith is that of questions. Questions like what it means to live in an understanding that we are made free in Christ (John 8:36), and that the gift that is this freedom comes through God's grace (Rom 3:24). And with this freedom, how do we live changed, joyfully and gratefully serving God, and sharing this good news and freedom with others? What other questions of the faith, or in your context might your congregation be wrestling with that could be reflected on this day?

## **Go and Be Honest**

### **Sunday November 5<sup>th</sup> – All Saints Sunday (Year A)**

Gospel Text: Matthew 5:1-12

Stewardship Passage: Matthew 5:1-12

Other Appointed Readings: Revelation 7:9-17; Psalm 34:1-10, 22; 1 John 3:1-3

Potential Stewardship Preaching Nugget: As we remember and celebrate the saints, living and dearly departed, hearing the Beatitudes provides a balm of comfort but also a reminder of our call, mission, and ministry together. On this day as we remember, we remember to “rejoice and be glad” (Matt 5:12). It could be a good day to be honest and talk about legacy, memory, and stories of faith and ministry- remembering who we are, where we have been, and wondering where God might be leading us yet.

### **Sunday November 12<sup>th</sup> – 24<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost (Lectionary 32A)**

Gospel Text: Matthew 25:1-13

Stewardship Passage: Amos 5:18-24

Other Appointed Readings: Psalm 70; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18

Potential Stewardship Preaching Nugget: “Let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream” (Amos 5:24). What is the relationship between our worship and service/ministry, and God’s work for justice in the world? To answer this question, we must first be willing to go deep and be honest. For the work of justice also means the work at times of lament, confession, forgiveness, and change.

### **Sunday November 19<sup>th</sup> – 25<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost (Lectionary 33A)**

Gospel Text: Matthew 25:14-30

Stewardship Passage: Matthew 25:14-30

Other Appointed Readings: Zephaniah 1:7, 12-18; Psalm 90:1-8 [9-11] 12; 1 Thessalonians 5:1-11

Potential Stewardship Preaching Nugget: The parable of the talents, or “the story of the slaves entrusted with talents,” is a golden opportunity to talk about talents, gifts, strengths, passions, vocations, etc. How are we stewarding our talents? Are we using them, or are we hoarding them? This question is a real invitation to be honest about how we are doing as God’s people, and what God is calling forth now among, through, for, and with God’s beloved.

### **Sunday November 26<sup>th</sup> – Christ the King Sunday (Lectionary 34A)**

Gospel Text: Matthew 25:31-46

Stewardship Passage: Matthew 25:31-46

Other Appointed Readings: Ezekiel 34:11-6, 20-24; Psalm 95:1-7a; Ephesians 1:15-23

Potential Stewardship Preaching Nugget: As we celebrate Christ the King, this is a good opportunity to remember the kind of king we worship and kingdom we are called to be a part of. Have we shared with those in need (Matt 25:35-36), or have we ignored them (Matt 25:42-43)? It is good to celebrate ministry in action, but also to honestly confess how far we have to go, and to recommit ourselves to be followers of Christ bearing love, mercy, and serving all those in need.

## **Go and Be Present**

### **Sunday December 3<sup>rd</sup> – First Sunday of Advent (Year B)**

Gospel Text: Mark 13:24-37

Stewardship Passage: Isaiah 64:1-9

Other Appointed Readings: Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19; 1 Corinthians 1:3-9

Potential Stewardship Preaching Nugget: Isaiah reminds us of God’s creation and creative power, but also that we are in relationship with God, as “we are all your people” (Isaiah 64:9). As we begin Advent and prepare for God’s coming again, how can we reorient ourselves and lift up our relationships towards God and one

another? How can we be more fully present amid this busy season with ourselves and with each other? That hope starts with the reminder that God comes to us, for us, and we pray that God comes not only with power, but with compassion.

**Sunday December 10<sup>th</sup> – Second Sunday of Advent (Year B)**

Gospel Text: Mark 1:1-8

Stewardship Passage: Isaiah 40:1-11

Other Appointed Readings: Psalm 85:1-2, 8-13; 2 Peter 3:8-15a

Potential Stewardship Preaching Nugget: “Every valley shall be lifted up, and every mountain and hill be made low” (Isaiah 40:4). This time of preparation is also a time of reminder that it is God’s work that is done for us and for all creation. How do we make room and prepare? How do we settle and find time to be still in the midst of the busyness of life that is especially common during December?

**Sunday December 17<sup>th</sup> – Third Sunday of Advent (Year B)**

Gospel Text: John 1:6-8, 19-28

Stewardship Passage: Luke 1:46b-55

Other Appointed Readings: Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11; Psalm 126; 1 Thessalonians 5:16-24

Potential Stewardship Preaching Nugget: The Magnificat beautifully describes what God has done and promises to do. It is a portrait of God’s work and the work of the Kingdom, as well as the relationships and lineage that is a part of that work. Have you seen the work of the Magnificat in action in your daily life?

**Sunday December 24<sup>th</sup> – Fourth Sunday of Advent (Year B)**

Gospel Text: Luke 1:26-38

Stewardship Passage: Psalm 89:1-4, 19-26

Other Appointed Readings: 2 Samuel 7:1-11, 16; Luke 1:46b-55; Romans 16:25-27

Potential Stewardship Preaching Nugget: “I will establish your descendants forever, and build your throne for all generations” (Ps 89:4). As we move from Advent to Christmas and remember God’s promises and their fulfillment, we give thanks and celebrate all that God has done and continues to do for us.

**Sunday December 24<sup>th</sup> – Christmas Eve- Nativity of Our Lord**

Gospel Text: Luke 2:1-20

Stewardship Passage: Isaiah 9:2-7

Other Appointed Readings: Isaiah 9:2-7; Psalm 96; Titus 2:11-14

Potential Stewardship Preaching Nugget: This is God’s work for us. Duh... Please don’t mess this up thinking it’s about what we do. We’re Lutherans after all.

**Monday December 25<sup>th</sup> – Christmas Day – Nativity of Our Lord**

Gospel Text: John 1:1-14

Stewardship Passage: John 1:1-14

Other Appointed Readings: Isaiah 52:7-10; Psalm 98; Hebrews 1:1-4 [5-12]

Potential Stewardship Preaching Nugget: See Christmas Eve.

**Sunday December 31<sup>st</sup> – First Sunday of Christmas (Year B)**

Gospel Text: Luke 2:22-40

Stewardship Passage: Galatians 4:4-7

Other Appointed Readings: Isaiah 61:10-62:3; Psalm 148; Galatians 4:4-7

Potential Stewardship Preaching Nugget: We are all God’s children, and as this, heirs of the promise (Gal 4:7). Let us rejoice and give thanks. Let us be present with loved ones and friends and celebrate amid the great twelve days and whatever other festival New Year’s experiences might bring.

## **Go and Rest**

### **Saturday January 6<sup>th</sup> – Epiphany of Our Lord**

Gospel Text: Matthew 2:1-12

Stewardship Passage: Matthew 2:1-12

Other Appointed Readings: Isaiah 60:1-6; Psalm 72:1-7, 10-14; Ephesians 3:1-12

Potential Stewardship Preaching Nugget: The wise men come bearing gifts. What do we bring and offer up or return to God in joy, gratitude, and homage for/to God? What might it look like to return or bring our full selves to God?

### **Sunday January 7<sup>th</sup> – Baptism of Our Lord (Lectionary 1B)**

Gospel Text: Mark 1:4-11

Stewardship Passage: Psalm 29

Other Appointed Readings: Genesis 1:1-5; Acts 19:1-7

Potential Stewardship Preaching Nugget: “The voice of the Lord is over the waters” (Ps 29:3). God calls forth and creates (Genesis 1), and through the water and the world we are sealed with the cross of Christ and received into God’s family as children. This is a good day to think about baptism and baptismal promises, like those that the community and all the baptized make to “live, hear, proclaim, serve, and strive for justice and peace” (ELW pages 228, 236), and their relationship with our identity as Children of God, and our vocations.

### **Sunday January 14<sup>th</sup> – Second Sunday after Epiphany (Lectionary 2B)**

Gospel Text: John 1:43-51

Stewardship Passage: 1 Samuel 3:1-10 [11-20]

Other Appointed Readings: Psalm 139:1-6, 13-18; 1 Corinthians 6:12-20

Potential Stewardship Preaching Nugget: All that we are and all that we are called to be, is from God. It is by God’s gift, grace, call, and blessing. What might this mean for us today? How might we find rest in this?

### **Sunday January 21<sup>st</sup> – Third Sunday after Epiphany (Lectionary 3B)**

Gospel Text: Mark 1:14-20

Stewardship Passage: Mark 1:14-20

Other Appointed Readings: Jonah 3:1-5, 10; Psalm 62:5-12; 1 Corinthians 7:29-31

Potential Stewardship Preaching Nugget: Jesus calls, “Follow me and I will make you fish for people” (Mark 1:17). This is a core part of what it means to tell the story and live the story of faith in action. How do we share it? How do we invite others to come and see, and then to be a part of this work and life of faith? Note, Mark’s version of this story in the NRSV says, “fish for people,” not just “men,” like the old Sunday School song quotes. There is a move related to inclusion here. God’s work and promises are for all of God’s beloved.

### **Sunday January 28<sup>th</sup> – Fourth Sunday after Epiphany (Lectionary 4B)**

Gospel Text: Mark 1:21-28

Stewardship Passage: Psalm 111

Other Appointed Readings: Deuteronomy 18:15-20; 1 Corinthians 8:1-13

Potential Stewardship Preaching Nugget: “Praise the Lord! I will give thanks to the Lord with my whole heart” (Psalm 111:1). How do we give thanks? Why do we give thanks? What does our praise look like? Feel like? Sound like? How might we simultaneously give thanks, while also taking time for sabbath and rest?

## **Go and Have THE Conversation**

### **Sunday February 4<sup>th</sup> – Fifth Sunday after Epiphany (Lectionary 5B)**

Gospel Text: Mark 1:29-39

Stewardship Passage: Mark 1:29-39

Other Appointed Readings: Isaiah 40:21-31; Psalm 147:1-11, 20c; 1 Corinthians 9:16-23

Potential Stewardship Preaching Nugget: Jesus goes out throughout Galilee serving, healing, and doing his ministry. How are we called and sent to continue God's work, to point to, be a part of it, and share the story of God in Christ's gifts of life, health, mercy, grace, and redemption? How might this work lead to important, needed, and sometimes hard conversations?

### **Sunday February 11<sup>th</sup> – Transfiguration of Our Lord (Year B)**

Gospel Text: Mark 9:2-9

Stewardship Passage: Mark 9:2-9

Other Appointed Readings: 2 Kings 2:1-12; Psalm 50:1-6; 2 Corinthians 4:3-6

Potential Stewardship Preaching Nugget: Where have you felt God's presence, or felt closer to God the divine? What are the great moments of your life, or mountaintop experiences? What were those times like, and how was it to come down from then? As followers of Christ, we gather together and witness the transfigured, but then are sent out into the world bearing hope, peace, and light into the broken and sometimes dark, yet beautiful and beloved world created by God. We are sent out to meet those in need, and to face the challenges of the world. Sometimes those might be as big as injustice, and other times as small but important as a conversation we may have been avoiding. How might we be moved to have the conversation?

### **Wednesday February 14<sup>th</sup> – Ash Wednesday**

Gospel Text: Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21

Stewardship Passage: Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21

Other Appointed Readings: Joel 2:1-2, 12-17; Isaiah 58:1-12; Psalm 51:1-17; 2 Corinthians 5:20b-6:10

Potential Stewardship Preaching Nugget: Giving alms and fasting are spiritual practices, but also more broadly faith and stewardship practices too. As we begin Lent, remembering our human frailty and sin, let us commit ourselves to growing deeper as stewards of God's love and mysteries. Let us be intentional with ourselves and others as signs of God's abundant and abiding love.

### **Sunday February 18<sup>th</sup> – First Sunday in Lent (Year B)**

Gospel Text: Mark 1:9-15

Stewardship Passage: Genesis 9:8-17

Other Appointed Readings: Psalm 25:1-10; 1 Peter 3:18-22

Potential Stewardship Preaching Nugget: God makes a covenant with Noah (Gen 9) is recalled, and it is a good time to remember the promises that God makes to us and for us- for life and that God not only wants to be in relationship with us, but also that life goes well for us. How do we live into and because of these promises? How do we show up in relationship with one another- to care for, listen, and share honestly?

### **Sunday February 25<sup>th</sup> – Second Sunday in Lent (Year B)**

Gospel Text: Mark 8:31-38

Stewardship Passage: Genesis 17:1-7, 15-16 God's promises to Abraham

Other Appointed Readings: Genesis 17:1-7, 15-16; Psalm 22:23-31; Romans 4:13-25

Potential Stewardship Preaching Nugget: God makes a covenant with Abraham, and says that his descendants will be great (Gen 17). Like last week, we hear that God wants to be in relationship with us, and the lengths God goes to promise that God is with us and for us, and will be so. Another option related to this and the promises that can be reflected on here, is legacy. Abraham leads quite the legacy of faith (as described in

Romans 4:13-25). What might our legacy of faith and stewardship be? What will be the stories of faith that are shared and told going forward and into the years ahead? What conversations might these questions lead to?

### ***Go and Be Intentional***

#### **Sunday March 3<sup>rd</sup> – Third Sunday in Lent (Year B)**

Gospel Text: John 2:13-22

Stewardship Passage: John 2:13-22

Other Appointed Readings: Exodus 20:1-17; Psalm 19; 1 Corinthians 1:18-25

Potential Stewardship Preaching Nugget: This week seems like one to reflect and think about why we do what we do. Perhaps these questions might be helpful in pondering. Do we sometimes lose sight of why we do what we do? Do we get so caught up in our fundraising, service, volunteerism, activities, etc., that we lose sight of the bigger picture? Is our narthex full of things to sign up for, but with little explanation for how that is (or isn't) part of our calling as followers of Christ? How do we steward our time and resources, and how might we need to adjust these and re-prioritize? How might doing so, be an opportunity to be more intentional as disciples and stewards?

#### **Sunday March 10<sup>th</sup> – Fourth Sunday in Lent (Year B)**

Gospel Text: John 3:14-21

Stewardship Passage: John 3:14-21

Other Appointed Readings: Numbers 21:4-9; Psalm 107:1-3, 17-22; Ephesians 2:1-10

Potential Stewardship Preaching Nugget: "God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him" (John 3:17). This is a pure gift and promise. How do we live into this and live in response to it? To ponder this question will lead to a deeper sense of discipleship and perhaps a deeper intentionality as a follower of Jesus.

#### **Sunday March 17<sup>th</sup> – Fifth Sunday in Lent (Year B)**

Gospel Text: John 12:20-33

Stewardship Passage: Jeremiah 31:31-34

Other Appointed Readings: Psalm 51:1-12; Psalm 119:9-16; Hebrews 5:5-10

Potential Stewardship Preaching Nugget: God describes a new covenant, and the forgiveness that will come with it (Jeremiah 31:31, 34). It is a great call to reflect on God's promises and gifts as we move through Lent toward the start of Holy Week next week. As it is also St. Patrick's Day, perhaps this is an opportunity for your congregation to connect the end of Lent with this celebrated saint's day, and close the Lenten season with something deeply meaningful, intentional, and perhaps even fun. What might that look like for you?

#### **Sunday March 24<sup>th</sup> – Sunday of the Passion/Palm Sunday (Year B)**

Gospel Text: Mark 11:1-11; Mark 14:1-15:47

Stewardship Passage: Mark 11:1-11; Mark 14:1-15:47

Other Appointed Readings: Isaiah 50:4-9a; Psalm 31:9-16; Philippians 2:5-11

Potential Stewardship Preaching Nugget: As we journey into and then through Jerusalem, and to the cross, we are confronted by the passion story. Let it speak for itself, as we join the hosannas and then the shouts of "crucify him," and then as we hear Jesus ask, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"



**Thursday March 28<sup>th</sup> – Maundy Thursday**

Gospel Text: John 13:1-17, 31b-35

Stewardship Passage: John 13:31b-35

Other Appointed Readings: Exodus 12:1-4 [5-10] 11-14; Psalm 116:1-2, 12-19; 1 Corinthians 11:23-26

Potential Stewardship Preaching Nugget: “I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another” (John 13:34). How do we live out this commandment in our words and deeds? What does it mean to show love and to serve our neighbors? How do we meet our neighbors where they are at, and accompany them?

**Friday March 29<sup>th</sup> – Good Friday**

Gospel Text: John 18:1-19:42

Stewardship Passage: None

Other Appointed Readings: Isaiah 52:13-53:12; Psalm 22; Hebrews 10:16-25

Potential Stewardship Preaching Nugget: Let this speak for itself.

**Saturday March 30<sup>th</sup> – Resurrection of Our Lord: Vigil of Easter /Sun. April 1<sup>st</sup> Easter Sunrise**

*Talk about God’s promises and you’ll be in good shape.*

**Sunday March 31<sup>st</sup> – Resurrection of Our Lord – Easter Day (Year B)**

Gospel Text: Mark 16:1-8

Stewardship Passage: Psalm 118:1-2, 14-24

Other Appointed Readings: Acts 10:34-43; Psalm 118:1-2, 14-24; 1 Corinthians 11:23-26

Potential Stewardship Preaching Nugget: “This is the day that Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it” (Psalm 118:24). As the tomb is open, we might rejoice, we might be afraid. What is our response? What does it look like? How are we changed? And what’s next as God has done what God can only do? Giving space for joy and big questions, might be a great way to connect the intentionality of Lent with our call as disciples and stewards to share the Good News of Easter.

**Go and Tell the Story****Sunday April 7<sup>th</sup> – Second Sunday of Easter (Year B)**

Gospel Text: John 20:19-31

Stewardship Passage: John 20:19-31

Other Appointed Readings: Acts 4:32-35; Psalm 133; 1 John 1:1-2:2

Potential Stewardship Preaching Nugget: “Seeing is believing,” yet also in this story we are reminded about the call with the Holy Spirit to forgive (and also the challenge if we choose to retain those sins). How do we see the Resurrected Christ showing up in our midst? How are we challenged, and like the disciples, set loose by the breath and reception of the Holy Spirit? How are we sent to go and tell the story?

**Sunday April 14<sup>th</sup> – Third Sunday of Easter (Year B)**

Gospel Text: Luke 24:36b-48

Stewardship Passage: Luke 24:36b-48

Other Appointed Readings: Acts 3:12-19; Psalm 4; 1 John 3:1-7

Potential Stewardship Preaching Nugget: Many of our faith conversations happen over meals. In today’s gospel story Jesus is meeting with those closest to him and enjoying a meal of fish (Luke 24:42). What are some examples in your context of gathering together and sharing stories, questions, and ideas of faith? How have these experiences propelled you as a community into action, but also, how have they allowed you to draw closer to each other and to experience God and wonder together about what God might be up to?



### **Sunday April 21<sup>st</sup> – Fourth Sunday of Easter (Year B)**

Gospel Text: John 10:11-18

Stewardship Passage: Psalm 23

Other Appointed Readings: Acts 4:5-12; Psalm 23; 1 John 3:16-24

Potential Stewardship Preaching Nugget: Through God we are given the gift of abundant life. What does it mean to live in this abundance as sheep in God's pasture? How do we reconcile our tension of scarcity and abundance? And how do we come to believe that we have enough and are enough in God? After all, the Psalmist says, "The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want" or "I shall not be in want" (Psalm 23:1).

Alternatively, as this is Earth Day weekend, what might this mean as we are also stewards of the Earth and all creation? How can we not be in want and use and steward God's creation responsibly? (For more on this, check out resources for more ideas for care of creation at: <https://lutheransrestoringcreation.org/>.)

### **Sunday April 28<sup>th</sup> – Fifth Sunday of Easter (Year B)**

Gospel Text: John 15:1-8

Stewardship Passage: 1 John 4:7-21

Other Appointed Readings: Acts 8:26-40; Psalm 22:25-31; 1 John 4:7-21

Potential Stewardship Preaching Nugget: At the core of our understanding of what it means to be a Christian and Child of God, is love. 1 John 4 is one of the passages often heard at weddings, but because of this it is not often considered deeply beyond this lens. What might it mean for a whole community, especially in light of the resurrection? Or, alternatively, what might it mean for us and our call as stewards of God's love? The Ethiopian eunuch (Acts 8) responds to this good news of God with rejoicing and I believe with a joyful response. What is our response? How does our response shape our work to go and tell the story?

### **Go and Be Church**

### **Sunday May 5<sup>th</sup> – Sixth Sunday of Easter (Year B)**

Gospel Text: John 15:9-17

Stewardship Passage: John 15:9-17

Other Appointed Readings: Acts 10:44-48; Psalm 98; 1 John 5:1-6

Potential Stewardship Preaching Nugget: Jesus reiterates his commandment that "you love one another as I have loved you" (John 15:12). This love is one that is to fill us with Christ's joy, so that that joy will be in us, fulfilling us in life abundant (John 15:11). How do we love one another? How do people see the good news of God in us? Do we live and serve joyfully? Or, to quote the spiritual "This Little Light of Mine," do we hide our joy under a bushel and keep it to ourselves? By sharing this love and joy, we live into what life abundant may look like and be. And we embody and live out our call to be the church.

### **Thursday May 9<sup>th</sup> – Ascension of Our Lord**

Gospel Text: Luke 24:44-53

Stewardship Passage: Luke 24:44-53

Other Appointed Readings: Acts 1:1-11; Psalm 47; Ephesians 1:15-21

Potential Stewardship Preaching Nugget: As Jesus ascends into heaven, he interprets the scriptures once more and says to the disciples present, "You are witnesses of these things" (Luke 24:48). They are witnesses, and we too are witnesses. What will be our witness? How will we go and be church? Will we embody the disciples' response as stewards, one where "they worshipped him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy" (Luke 24:52)? Or will we keep this news to ourselves? Will we stand looking up toward heaven (like in Acts 1:11)? Or will we rejoice and clap our hands with loud songs of joy (as in Psalm 47:1)? We are called, gathered, and sent. What does this really mean for us, now today, as we are called to go and be church?

**Sunday May 12<sup>th</sup> – Seventh Sunday of Easter (Year B)**

Gospel Text: John 17:6-19

Stewardship Passage: Psalm 1

Other Appointed Readings: Acts 1:15-17, 21-26; Psalm 1; 1 John 5:9-13

Potential Stewardship Preaching Nugget: “Happy are those...” (Psalm 1). On this last Sunday of Easter, do we sing “I’m So Glad Jesus Lifted Me,” or have we already moved on? Let us celebrate and tell stories of God at work, and how we have experienced this happiness and joy, but also how we have seen God at work in our midst. Moving towards Pentecost, the call and leading of the Holy Spirit enables us to tell our stories, God’s story, and how we are part of God’s on-going story. Reflecting on the “how” we tell and the importance of “telling” may be a very valuable stewardship practice and message today, as they are central to who we are called, gathered, and sent to be as the church.

**Sunday May 19<sup>th</sup> – Day of Pentecost (Year B)**

Gospel Text: John 15:26-27; 16:4b-15

Stewardship Passage: Acts 2:1-21

Other Appointed Readings: Acts 2:1-21; Psalm 104:24-34, 35b; Romans 8:22-27

Potential Stewardship Preaching Nugget: As the Holy Spirit comes and fills us, we are changed forever. What does this mean? Where will the Holy Spirit lead? To what or who are we being called? These questions are part of the mysteries of faith which we entrusted with and steward. Where might the Holy Spirit be leading today? What might the Spirit’s leading mean for who the church is called to be now and next?

**Sunday May 26<sup>th</sup> – The Holy Trinity (Year B)**

Gospel Text: John 3:1-17

Stewardship Passage: Romans 8:12-17

Other Appointed Readings: Isaiah 6:1-8; Psalm 29; Romans 8:12-17

Potential Stewardship Preaching Nugget: As Children of God, we are “heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ” (Romans 8:17). What does it mean to be in relationship with the community of the Triune God? As heirs to the promise, we are given the gifts of the promise, and entrusted with much. These gifts are at the heart of the Church. What does it look like as we reflect on this and “Go and Be Church”? What might be next for you and your congregation?

*\*All scripture quoted in this resource is from the NRSV, unless otherwise noted.*

*This resource has been created, compiled, and curated by Deacon Timothy Siburg for the congregations of the Nebraska Synod, ELCA for the 2023 (Year A-B) and 2024 (Year B) program ministry years. It may be used, shared, and adapted as useful for your congregations. If you have questions or creative ideas of ways to incorporate this in your ministry context, please contact Deacon Timothy at: [timothy@nebraskasynod.org](mailto:timothy@nebraskasynod.org).*

